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Voice

A

VOICE FROM ENGLAND,

IN ANSWER TO

“L'EMPEREUR NAPOLÉON III.
ET L'ANGLETERRE.”

BY

AN ENGLISHMAN OUT OF OFFICE.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, PICCADILLY.
1858.

Price Sixpence.

BIBLIOTHECA
REGIA
MONACENSIS.

A VOICE FROM ENGLAND.

“ Nous croyons qu'il y a un devoir à remplir envers l'opinion publique.”

“ WE deem that there is a duty to perform towards public opinion.” Such are the opening words of a pamphlet recently published at Paris, and remarkable alike for the impartiality of its tone, and the partiality of its matter.

The profound and painful silence which surrounds the Imperial throne in France, renders more than ordinarily noticeable any language by which that silence is from time to time permitted to be broken; and the pamphlet entitled “L'Empereur Napoléon III. et l'Angleterre,” which, in a land of free literature, and at a time of unstifled discussion, would probably have attracted but slight and insignificant attention, is, under present circumstances, deserving of especial remark, were it only for the important admission which it contains; viz., that there is, even in France, such a thing as public opinion, and a duty due thereto.

The mode, however, in which the author of “Napoléon III.” has attempted to perform that duty, to which he thus honourably refers, is more ingenious than ingenuous. “Above all,” he says, “we will deal only with facts.” But facts are not corroborated by assertions; and his first and fundamental assertion is certainly not founded upon facts.

I.

“ When Louis Napoleon was elected President of the Republic, he found himself surrounded in the assembly which was destined to share and often to thwart his power, only by parties hostile, or at

least but little friendly to England. The Legitimists retained against our secular enemies, the historical resentment which sprung from our ancient national conflicts; the Republicans yet recalled the league of Pitt and Coburg for the annihilation of the Revolution; the Orleanists regretted alike the protection which humiliated them, and the desertion from which they suffered before their fall; finally, the partisans of the Empire had their souls still ulcerated with the most painful reminiscences of contemporary history."

If the author of this assertion had ever condescended to peruse the pages of the *Siècle* newspaper, his natural candour would surely have constrained him to admit that there existed in the organ of the largest and most national party in France, a wiser and more generous appreciation of the character of England, of the history of the past, and the policy of the present, than he here attributes to his countrymen. But can he, indeed, have forgotten that the first act of that Republic which was subsequently strangled by his Imperial patron, was to solicit the recognition and seek the support of England? Does he not remember that that eloquent and high-minded man whose courage and genius saved France from the passing horrors of anarchy without inflicting upon her the long calamities of despotism, cordially exerted himself to enhance the security of the young Republic, by obtaining for it that recognition on the part of England which was, he said, calculated "to produce a great moral effect on Europe"?

Throughout the whole of the relations between that brief and ill-fated Republic and the Government of England, who can discover a single sign of apprehensive reminiscences about "Pitt and Coburg"? The author of "*Napoléon III.*," in asserting that at the period of the Presidency the sentiments of the French Republic were those of hostility to England, gratuitously exposes his countrymen to the unanswerable charge of ingratitude and stupidity.

But if the veracity of these assertions be doubtful, their purpose is at least sufficiently apparent. By exaggerating the animosity of the French people, it is sought to magnify the generosity of the French ruler. To prove the enlightenment of this Prince it is found necessary to assert the stupidity of his people.

About the "ulceration of soul" attributed to the Imperialist party we will not dispute with the Imperial apologist. He is in a

position to judge "ex ungue leonem;" and the organs and chiefs of that party have, in their most recent language, certainly evinced a very inflammatory state of mind. But the partisans of the Empire were not France when their chief pledged his princely oath of fidelity to the Republic; and they are not France even at this moment, although that oath has been broken, and that republic suppressed.

"What should he do, the heir of the Emperor Napoleon I., now become sovereign of France? Should he yield to the rancour and prejudice of parties? Should he encourage by his example, those international animosities still tremulously alive to the memory of Waterloo and St. Helena? Should he avenge, at least by his coldness, the insults offered to his name and character by the English Press before his election? No. Exile is a school of wisdom and maturity to those whom God destines to be rulers."

Assuredly so. It is a school, moreover, in which many French statesmen have been pupils. Louis Napoleon was not the first. To him, to all, the unconditional hospitality of England, the unservient protection of British laws, had softened the asperities of this stern seminary. But let us put the question above quoted in a more reasonable form, and in words more consonant with circumstances.

What should he do,—the descendant of a sovereign whose dynasty had been prohibited by the public law of Europe—now that he had succeeded to the administration of a political system novel in its origin, unstable in its situation, uncertain in its destinies? He found himself surrounded at home by a society whose recent reminiscences, whose immediate apprehensions, rendered tranquillity the object of universal desire. He found himself surrounded abroad by the vigilant and mistrustful neutrality of the great powers of the Continent, who watched with acknowledged suspicion the resurrection of the name of Napoleon amongst the sovereignties of Europe. He found himself at the head of a state great, indeed, in all time and under all circumstances, but in which, at that moment, capital was stagnant and credit paralysed. What should he do? Should his first act be one of hostility to the most powerful and the most contiguous of his neighbours? or of ingratitude to that Government whose protection had been freely extended to himself as an exile,

and whose friendly recognition had been frankly accorded to his country when in a crisis of experimental government?

Assuredly common sense and self-interest must alike have prompted the President of the French Republic to seek the support and countenance of England. The advantages to be reaped by England from an Anglo-French alliance were remote and contingent; those to be derived by France from such an alliance were immediate and paramount. Why then, in the name of all justice and good sense, why ungenerously insinuate that this alliance has been purchased by sacrifices in which England has had no share, and France no motive?

II.

Having thus misrepresented facts to suit a purpose, the author of the French pamphlet then misrepresents the purport of the facts which he proceeds to cite.

We are now reminded by him, that when in 1849, the Porte was menaced by Austria on account of the asylum afforded in Turkey to Hungarian refugees, the French fleet was ordered to proceed to the Dardanelles contemporaneously, though not in conjunction, with the British squadron.

That when, shortly afterwards, the ultimatum of Lord Palmerston to the Greek Government alarmed Europe, the French ambassador was withdrawn from London. That on this occasion the heads of the *Partie droite* presented themselves at the Elysée to express their satisfaction at the event, and were received with coldness by the Prince President.

These two facts are so obviously alien to the subject which they are adduced to illustrate, and apparently of such intrinsic unimportance, that at first sight one is at a loss to discover why they are introduced. It is not until after careful and frequent perusal of the page in which they are recorded, that we reach the inference which is sought to be drawn from them.

This may be substantially stated thus:—

Mission of the French Squadron to the Dardanelles, contem-

poraneously with that of England, proves the eagerness of the Prince President to co-operate with the British Government.

Orders given to the French Fleet not to sail conjointly with Her Majesty's Ships, proves the mistrust of England still pervading the minds of the French Cabinet.

Deduction: Generous confidence and superior intelligence of the Prince President!

The same system of argumentation recurs in reference to the succeeding fact. Same proposition: same corollary.

The withdrawal of M. Drouyn de Lhuys from London proves the hostility to England of the French Ministers.

Cold reception of the *Partie droite* at the Elysée proves the cordial sentiments towards England of the Prince President.

Deduction: Superior intelligence and generous confidence of the Prince President.

General corollary: Lasting gratitude due on the part of England to this faithful and enlightened Potentate.

But surely it is ridiculous and puerile to attribute these events to personal, instead of political, motives. If no political object was to be served by the despatch of the French Fleet to the Turkish waters in 1849, why should this step have been taken? If the step were dictated by motives of prudent policy, the Prince President is entitled to the approval of his own countrymen; but assuredly he has no claim on that account to the gratitude of England.

The overbearing conduct of Lord Palmerston in Greece, adopted without an aim, and abandoned without a result, was condemned by every right-thinking man in England. The dissatisfaction at such conduct, expressed by a foreign power, could not possibly be resented by the British Nation. Nor can we discover in either of the facts, thus compelled into our consideration, anything reasonably calculated either to flatter or to wound the susceptibilities of England.

III.

The *Coup d'État* is thus airily touched, and gracefully disposed of:—

“Now comes the Second of December. This was an act belonging to our interior situation, and which concerned nobody abroad.

Nevertheless, many English journals expatiated in declamation against the man who saved his country from a fearful anarchy, and perhaps preserved Europe from a general shock. There is no sort of calumny which these papers do not invent, no sort of error which they do not propagate."

The French writer, after then observing that *only* 150 persons were slaughtered on that occasion, declares the event to have been one which merited the gratitude of a civilised people, and declaims again against the audacity of the English Press.

This naturally leads him to a eulogium upon his Imperial patron; for unfortunately with writers of this subservient stamp, abuse of English institutions is the invariable preamble to adulation of French despotism.

"Indifference was impossible in the face of such outrages. But an impassive reserve was dictated by patriotism and the public interest. The chief of France suffered to roll away this stream of evil passions, with which was mingled the scum of our civil discords. *He would not even authorise reprisals, which nevertheless would have been easy, on the part of the French Press.* Two great peoples cannot with impunity offend each other, for when they offend each other the next step is to fight each other. This, indeed, is what happened after the Treaty of Amiens, so soon compromised by the violence of the tribune and the press against the First Consul."

This paragraph is mainly important for the admission which it contains, and which we have put in Italics; for from this admission we must plainly infer that the recent outrageous and re-iterated abuse in the French journals, not of any particular men or measures, but of the whole British Nation, in its collective personality, *has been authorised by the Emperor Napoleon III.*

The author of the French pamphlet, by referring to the Peace of Amiens, recalls to our memory the fact that when, after the signature of that treaty, the First Consul of France, complaining of the language of the British Press, desired that its freedom should be shackled, Charles Fox replied, from his British heart, in his bad French, "*Ôtez cela de votre tête, Premier Consul!*"

In those days the statesmen of England, if indifferent Frenchmen, were certainly good Englishmen. We now come to the concluding statement which closes that section of the French pamphlet

under our consideration ; and it is important. Hear what it says :—

“Already in 1852, at the moment of the most violent aggressions of a portion of the English Press, the City of London had protested with energy, against a polemic which revolted its good sense, and its patriotism. Two years later, when the Emperor accompanied by the Empress, visited, as an ally, the Queen of the Three Kingdoms, he found in that great country only sympathy and respect.”

What does this prove ? Let us review the whole position.

In England public opinion is not a madman in chains. This grand power in the British Islands is unfettered, and outspoken ; and for this reason it is not perilous. No one who has rightly studied our institutions, will confuse with the verdict recorded in our journals upon the acts of a public man, the conduct to be maintained by our Government towards a friendly state.

As an individual, Louis Napoleon stands before the tribunal of contemporary opinion, as he will eventually stand before that of posterity, quite irrespectively of the position he has obtained, to be judged alone by the acts whereby he has obtained it, and those by which he defends it.

But as the representative of France, a great and gallant people, our courageous and high-spirited allies, he has an unquestionable right to exact from those who officially represent the Majesty of England, all the consideration and support which is due to the dignity of that great nation of which he is the chief, and the loyalty of that alliance to which he is a party.

In the one case, we are free to contemplate his acts with reference to the immutable principles of justice and morality. In the other, we are reasonably bound to regard those acts solely and simply in the political sphere, within the limits of which they may affect our safety and honour as a nation.

Even the Egyptians judged their Pharaohs after death ; and in those mysterious tribunals of the Nile, a living slave was free to appeal against the immortality about to be accorded to a departed tyrant. But in the daily courts of popular opinion in these British realms, the potentates of the hour are submitted to judgment whilst they are yet living, whilst their acts are recent, and the judgment may perhaps be swayed by the passing passions of the day. This is

perhaps unfortunate in some respects, but it is the inevitable result of an advancing civilisation, and even the most dexterous despot cannot evade the judgment of men who call a spade a spade.

Nevertheless, from the moment in which Louis Napoleon the public man, became Louis Napoleon the representative of France and the ally of England, there was not found throughout the United Kingdom a single functionary, high or low, responsible in his public conduct and executive authority for the honour, the good faith, and loyalty of this nation, who did not exert every effort, and display the most spontaneous alacrity to cement and confirm that alliance in which we all recognised and honoured, not the union of a French autocrat and an English premier, but the union of two great and intelligent nations, for the general welfare of each other, and of Europe.

It is neither in our place nor our intentions to dispute with the Imperial pamphleteer the circumstances of the Second of December. Those who at that period were resident in Paris may possibly deem his adroit and cheerful little sketch of the event somewhat at variance with the stern details within their recollection. But it must be patent to every understanding, that a man who had just seized the helm of state in France by throwing the crew overboard, had more to gain from the friendly support of a great and old-established power such as England, than our own country could possibly derive from association with a fortunate adventurer. When Louis Napoleon first placed upon his head the crown of his uncle, the ban of Europe was yet on record against the dynasty which he sought to restore. To have the sanction of England to a government of which a great French writer has said that, but a few months before its establishment, "*no man could have dared to dream the possibility*,"* was of vital importance; and thus far the sacrifices and the generosity have been upon our own side of the alliance, not upon that of the French Emperor.

IV.

The writer of the French Pamphlet next proceeds to review the operations of the Allied Armies in the Crimea. And this subject

* Montalembert.

he treats upon the whole in a spirit of such justice and conciliation, that to criticise his complacent chronicle of that arduous campaign would be invidious. England is a great maritime power; France a great military power. Opinions still differ as to the wisdom of the plan adopted for the late war with Russia. The result of this plan however was that the operations of the allied forces were exclusively military; and in these the larger share of glory and renown naturally accrued to the greater military power. No voice of regret for this has ever been raised in England. In all that can render the French nation justly proud of the exploits of its noble and unrivalled army we have cordially and constantly sympathised.

We have happily no cause to blush for the conduct of our own troops, in recalling that of our allies.

The military forces of France and England in the Crimea were unequal; but the hardships of the campaign were shared alike.

V.

“The alliance then appeared indissoluble. Soon, however, a dissension arose in the interpretations of the conditions of peace. This divergence of opinion, considered at Paris to be of but small importance, assumed exaggerated proportions in London. And once more a portion of the English Press, adding, on this occasion, ingratitude to injustice, and forgetting the reminiscences of the recent past, was seen to insult the Emperor, his government, his acts, his intentions. The Emperor remained unmoved.

“More than this: led by a spirit of moderation, and in the interests of mutual good understanding, *France and Russia placed themselves in unison with England*. The points in discussion referred, moreover, to secondary interests which affected in no wise the guarantees stipulated by the Treaty of Paris.”

What was this dissension? whence this divergence of opinion?

Its origin is to be found in the twentieth article of the Treaty of Paris, which we therefore quote:—

“ART. XX. H. M. The Emperor of all the Russias consents to the rectification of his frontier, in Bessarabia.

"The new frontier shall begin from the Black Sea, one kilometer to the east of Lake Bournasola; shall run perpendicularly to the Akerman road; shall follow that road to the Val de Trajan, and pass to the south of Bolgrad; ascend the course of the river Jalpuck to the height of Saratsika, and terminate at Katamori on the Pruth." * * *

"ART. XXI. The territory ceded by Russia shall be annexed to the Principality of Moldavia." * * *

Let any man honestly read the treaty from which these articles are extracted, and declare whether the substantial purport of the whole instrument does not reside in the stipulations they contain. The object of these stipulations is plainly to exclude Russia from any position which could leave it in her power to domineer over the free navigation of the Danube.

Now, what took place?

When the boundary commission delegated by the Conference of Paris to carry out these stipulations were proceeding to their work, it was attempted to draw the stipulated frontier-line through a Bolgrad unknown to the plenipotentiaries of France and England, and which now appeared for the first time upon the Russian charts. The line so drawn would have placed within the possession of Russia a large estuary opening into the Danube, and so situated as to command the whole navigation of the river.

Was this "*a difference of small importance*," or one which "*referred only to secondary interests in no wise affecting the stipulated guarantees of the Treaty of Paris*"? Can the Emperor claim the merit of exceptional good faith, or singular generosity, in placing himself, after hesitation and dispute, in unison with England upon this point?

The only thing remarkable in this "divergence of opinion" is, that a divergence of opinion should, for a moment even, have existed. Who could have anticipated that upon a point of such palpable importance, the first inclination of France should have been to take part with her recent foe, against an ally who had unreservedly lavished blood and treasure, to secure those objects of mutual interest which were about to be annihilated by such a paltry quibble?

The merit ungraciously claimed from this vacillating concession to

the duties of the alliance can the less rightfully be accorded, when we remember that the imminent danger of a financial crisis at home, and the acknowledged difficulty of removing their troops from the Crimea, compelled the French Government to close the war at a period which in England was deemed premature, when our army was in the most flourishing condition, and our resources more than ever available for the prosecution of the conflict.

In acquiescing, at a moment when, upon the British side of the channel, the war was more than ever popular, and the means of prosecuting it more than ever forcible, in conditions of peace, which, though not discreditable, cannot certainly be deemed satisfactory, the generosity of conduct was again upon the side of England.

"Next followed the question of the Principalities. At the Congress of Paris, France and England were agreed in favour of the union. Later, the Cabinet of St. James's changed its opinion, and, by a lamentable appreciation of things, it was the Cabinet of the Tuileries which was represented at London as deserting the Alliance. The French Government might justly have felt wounded at an interpretation so false of conduct so loyal and so moderate. At that moment the revolt in India had just broken out; had the sentiments of France been less sincere, her views less disinterested, *the occasion was a good one to show herself more reserved, more exacting perhaps, towards her ally.* The Emperor acted quite otherwise. The embarrassments imposed on England by the war in India only rendered him more conciliatory at Osborne, upon the question of the Principalities."

If a man be entitled to claim the merit of a lofty morality because he has refrained from picking a pocket when "the occasion was a good one," then we may admit the validity of this argument. Otherwise it is contemptible. To us it appears, that it would perhaps be cogent amongst a society of thieves, but that between honest men it is unworthy of discussion.

It is not true that the English Government was ever compromised to support the union of the Principalities. The Congress of Paris confined itself, in regard to this question, to the delegation of a commission to investigate upon the spot the condition and capabilities of the Principalities, and to report its views upon the form and system of government best adapted to maintain the intrinsic interests of

those territories in compatibility with the integrity and independence of the Porte.

The hereditary sympathies of England naturally disposed us to view with approbation, the exercise of independent institutions by any state which could be proved to be capable of self-government. But the main object of the war, and consequently the main object of the peace, was to secure the safety and independence of the Sultan's dominions. It soon became apparent to Her Majesty's Government that this object would be injuriously affected by the proposed union of the Principalities. Nevertheless, France continued to advocate the union of these states, probably deeming the safety and independence of the Porte to be, in the adroit language of the French pamphlet, "a point of minor importance, affecting only secondary interests." The union was also, not unnaturally, advocated by Sardinia, because it was opposed by Austria. Then occurred the Moldavian elections, which did not return a single advocate for the union. Against these elections, Russia, France, and Sardinia protested. The Porte refused to annul them, and M. de Thouvenal took down his flag.

At this juncture the secret negotiations at Osborne took place, and were conducted by the Emperor in person.

The anonymous, but doubtless distinguished, author of the French pamphlet is in an exceptional position to treat of these negotiations; for their purport and result is not yet before the public, nor is it possible to discuss their details without departing from diplomatic reserve.

All that the public is yet aware of is the fact, that immediately after these negotiations, the British Government co-operated with that of France in urging the Porte to annul the elections objected to by our ally.

Thus far the concession has been ours. Until the opening of the ensuing Conferences at Paris, the public cannot know how this concession has been met by the French Government. Until then the conciliation and magnanimity claimed by the author of the French pamphlet for his Imperial master must be taken upon trust.

But before we can accord to His Imperial Majesty the title he asserts to an extravagant generosity in maintaining the English alliance, it is necessary that he should prove the existence of some

occasion upon which to break that alliance has been materially and immediately his interest.

VI.

"We are now about to touch upon a subject which most painfully regards the relation between the two countries; a subject which is capable, if not frankly explained, of affecting that confidence which is the strength of their alliance."

After this announcement, the author of the French pamphlet proceeds to record the cowardly and remorseless attempt of the 14th of January upon the life of His Majesty the Emperor of France, which, though fortunately unsuccessful in its object, proved fatal in its consequences to so many innocent lives.

"Upon recovering from the momentary stupefaction caused by an event so sudden and so horrible, the first question asked by the whole of France was: 'Whence came the assassins?'"

"The assassins came from England.

"Then people in France naturally exclaimed: 'How? It is always, then, in England that these attempts against the existence of the Emperor and of society are plotted. Is this what we have to expect from an alliance so loyally maintained in peace—so gloriously cemented by war?'"

But this attempt was not the first of the kind. It had been preceded by many others, of which the issue had been forestalled by the vigilance of the French police, but of which the origin was clearly traced to England.

VII.

These are enumerated and described.

It is not stated that for the timely knowledge which enabled the French Government to bring to nought these criminal and secret plots, that Government was often indebted to the zealous activity of the English police, and the friendly intimation of the English Foreign Office.

It is not stated that, so soon as these dark and hidden thoughts had passed into open and ignominious crime, the only person implicated therein who could be found within our shores was, though an alien, brought to immediate trial, and is now awaiting the sentence of our laws.

It is not stated that the author of a publication deemed by the French Government to be incentive to such crimes, has also been summoned to the bar of British justice, at the prosecution of the British Government.

Yet these facts are no less true than those which the author of the French pamphlet elaborately records, and common justice demands that they should not have been studiously ignored.

VIII.

We are now told that public opinion in France "passionately excited by a variety of facts having all a common origin, accused that toleration by which it had for a long time been disquieted.

"In its legitimate indignation against those who had incited and executed the crime, it attributed to that toleration a share in the responsibility which it was not more just to impose upon England than upon Belgium, Switzerland, and Piedmont. Opinion yielded to a sense of irritation, which was caused, in point of fact, by a sentiment of devotion and respect for the Emperor. The sovereign of France could not but be grateful for such a sentiment. But it is right to remark that, consistently with his invariable practice on a question which was chiefly personal, which regarded his own existence and that of the Empress who, like himself, had just escaped from death, he did not depart, for a single moment, from that justice which he owed to all, or that calm of mind which he owed to himself."

It was felt, however, in France that the immediate consideration of those events was a duty which pressed heavily upon every government.

"Thus, after the 14th of January there was but one cry throughout the whole of France. Two things were called for: The one, that assassins condemned by justice should be removed from our frontiers; the other, the interdiction of the system of public apology for assassination in journals and meetings.

"This desire found its re-iterated expression in the speeches of the great bodies of the State, in the addresses of the Magistracy, of the Municipal Councils, of the National Guard. It was natural that the addresses of the army should be more violent. They expressed with an energy altogether military the sentiments of France."

Let us reduce these phrases to their substantial meaning.

"The removal from our frontiers of assassins condemned by justice, and the interdiction of public apologies for assassination."

Do these words really imply that any man already publicly condemned before a legitimate tribunal in any part of the world as an assassin, has been harboured in England, or that our laws are inadequate to reach the authors of libellous and seditious writings?

Assuredly they cannot. For, upon the one hand, the treaties of extradition which we maintain with the states of the Continent, and, on the other, the proceedings now pending in our courts, sufficiently foreclose the possibility of such a meaning. As regards the one case, we defy even the Imperial pamphleteer to point out a condemned assassin protected from the reach of justice by our laws; as regards the other, we can ourselves triumphantly point to a prosecuted libeller now awaiting the penalty of those laws.

We must, then, believe that this ambiguous language clothes an insidious demand for limiting the freedom of the subject by a system of arrests upon suspicion, and the freedom of the Press by a system of anticipatory prohibitions.

Yet this also appears incredible.

The sagacity and penetration of the Emperor Napoleon III. are remarkable. His residence in England has been long, and, doubtless, observant. Is it then supposable that he could for a moment expect that such demands as these should be openly entertained, or secretly acquiesced in, by a British Ministry?

Here the question becomes puzzling; but, fortunately, it is capable of elucidation by reference to a corresponding and almost contemporaneous case.

In the paragraph which we have already quoted from this Gallic guardian of the world's opinion, England is justly placed, with reference to the subject of political asylum, in the same category as Belgium, Sardinia, and Switzerland. It is, therefore, reasonable to

interpret what is ambiguous in the language held towards ourselves by what is conspicuous in the language held towards these other states.

Count Walewski, in instructing M. de Salinac Fénelon to demand of the Helvetic Government the removal from the frontier cantons, not only of French, but of Italian and other foreign subjects, thus explicitly expresses himself:—

“I pray you, then, M. le Comte, to insist upon it, with the President of the Confederation, that measures be taken without delay, in order that refugees *notoriously known as disposed* to take part in criminal enterprises, especially those organised into societies in the canton of Geneva, be deposited far from our frontiers.

“The Government of the Emperor does not see that, in an affair *which so nearly concerns our international relations*, the Federal Council can be checked by the indifference or ill will of the Cantonal Authorities, as has so often happened since 1852. In the event of the Helvetic Government not consulting on the means of satisfying our just requirements, it will incur a grave responsibility, *and will only have to take to itself the consequences which its determination may entail.*”

Now, had this been the language used towards England, the Anglo-French alliance must have been inevitably ruptured. Nevertheless, that which it is reasonable to exact from Switzerland, it is not unreasonable to expect from England in this matter. The two cases are identical. What, then, should be done? The Emperor of the French is a man of shrewd expedients. He appears to have resolved not to make the menace himself, for that would be uncourteous and impolitic, but to instruct “public opinion” to make it, for that would be at once significant and safe.

And here again recurs the same position which has been presented “*usque ad nauseam*,” in the pages of the French pamphlet.

(1) The moderation of the Emperor, (2) contrasted with these menacing expressions of public opinion, (3) demands the gratitude of England!

Yet who is it that does not know that this menacing language, before it could have found public expression, must have received the private sanction of the supreme power in France? Nor is this all. Not only did His Imperial Majesty privately approve, publicly re-

ceive, and officially promulgate the violent addresses of his generals, but his anonymous apologist is now permitted to give to those addresses a significance which we could not otherwise attribute to them, by gravely declaring that they "expressed, with an ardour altogether military, *the sentiments of France.*"

IX.

Here, reproaches against the misrepresentation of the French demands on England, are followed by assertions that in no country is the right of political asylum so revered and cherished as in France.

X.

"But the right of asylum afforded in England to the representatives and defenders of a ruined cause, ought not to protect the authors or accomplices of assassination. Meetings in honour of political assassins have been held in London, and tyrannicide is known to have been, on one occasion, the subject of discussion in a debating society in the City."

This is certainly an ominous fact. But what will be thought in France when we mention the astounding circumstance, that little boys are permitted in our public schools to declaim about the act of Brutus, and, by writing Latin verses on the death of Cato, to imbibe at an early age opinions upon suicide inconsistent with all modern moralities?

XI.

This section is devoted to a detailed account of the trial in England of Jean Peltier in 1802, for a libel on the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte.

We know not with what object this narrative is given: but it all

sufficiently proves that our laws are fully adequate to deal with any act of a foreign subject in England, of which a foreign sovereign can legitimately complain.

The author of the French pamphlet, however, seeks to contrast past times with present; and in order to illustrate recent events, invites our attention to those of earlier days in the history of "*La Vielle Angleterre*."

We accept the invitation; and that the more readily, because an attempt has lately been made in France to misrepresent circumstances in the reign of William III., for the purpose of palliating those which have disfigured the reign of Napoleon III.

Between the defender of English liberties and the destroyer of liberty in France we can recognise no parallel; but between the relative situation of the two countries in 1691 and 1858 a striking parallel there is.

France at that period was with regard to England what England now is with regard to France—an asylum to the unfortunate and the disaffected. Plots were then incessantly formed by the exiled Court at St. Germain's, and fostered by the French Court at Versailles, against the Protestant succession in England. Amongst these was one which bears a strange similarity to that which has recently horrified Europe.*

The conspirators were furnished with money and instructions at St. Germain's. It was resolved to assassinate William by a discharge of blunderbusses and musketballs upon the royal coach, which contained sixteen persons. Simultaneously with the success of this criminal attempt England was to be invaded; and it was understood that, so soon as the standard of revolt had been raised within our shores, several thousand French troops would effect a landing. The French fleet was for this purpose sent to Calais.

The plot was discovered before it could be perpetrated. The authors were arrested; the country was immediately placed in a state of defence; and the king summoned Parliament, to disclose to it the terrible details of a conspiracy at once more formidable and more ferocious than any heard of since the crime of Cataline. It was not alone the life of a popular sovereign, it was the liberties and religion of a whole people that had been imperilled.

* The Plot of Fenwick, Parkyns, and others.

Nevertheless, when during the private negotiations for the Treaty of Ryswick, it was ~~prop~~posed to insert into the instrument of peace, some guarantee on the part of France for the prevention of similar conspiracies, and the removal from St. Germain's of those English refugees who there formed a focus of intrigue. The *Grande Monarque*, "who was every inch a king," vehemently vindicated the privilege of asylum open in France to political misfortune, and declined to give the pledge proposed, upon the legitimate grounds that he could not make laws in France to protect kings in England.

Is it then to be expected that measures which, in the seventeenth century, an absolute monarch refused to discuss, a constitutional government should, in the nineteenth century, agree to adopt?

But it is not only the freedom accorded in England to the expression of opinion by those exiled men, who, so long as they do not seek to violate the sanctity, are entitled to the protection of our laws, which is complained of in this pamphlet—a pamphlet which we may regard as semi-official. The opinions freely expressed in our native Press upon men and measures, in France are no less resented. This is perhaps not unreasonable, for Despotism has less to fear from Assassination than from Public Opinion. Yet the Emperor and his Cabinet cannot be ignorant that for the language of the English Press no Government in England is, or can be, responsible; for the Press may sometimes coerce the Government, but the Government can never coerce the Press. If, then, the Cabinet of the Tuileries be thus susceptible to the language of a Press which is free alike from official surveillance and official responsibility, what must we think of the menacing and abusive tone of the daily organs—we will not say of France, but of the French Emperor?

We wish particularly that notice should be given to the fact that, whilst the censure of public opinion, expressed in England through the Press, has been frequently and severely declared as regards the acts of a particular government in France, no language, save that of cordial sympathy and honest appreciation, has at any time been uttered by our public journals in reference to France as a nation. The abuse of the French Press, the menaces of the French officials, have, on the contrary, been persistently directed, not against particular men or measures in England, but against the English nation.

Yet we know that no dog in this kennel of vituperation can bark without being first unmuzzled by an official hand.

What then is the real position of the French Government upon which the author of "*Napoléon III. et l'Angleterre*," invites, whilst he seeks to mislead, opinion?

The Government of the Emperor has stifled all constitutional opposition to its power, and foreclosed all means of legitimate appeal against its acts. A Government, placing itself in such a position, virtually declares that it can only be reached by the secret and dastard hand of the assassin; and thus becomes remotely responsible for the crimes against which it appeals.

There is a story of a sea captain who converted a Jew by submerging him in the water until, at the point of suffocation, the unfortunate Hebrew resolved to purchase his existence by embracing Christianity. But the pious propagandist, mistrustful of Israelitish faith, and apprehensive of a return to Judaism, resolved to secure to his convert the immediate realisation of that blissful eternity which now awaited him, by drowning the Jew.

Louis Napoleon has drowned his Jew. For no sooner had the Empire declared itself to be the expression of the National Will, than it took shrewd care to prevent the National Will from ever expressing itself again.

With this we have nothing to do. With the internal policy of a foreign Government we have, as a nation, no concern, however much we may, as moral and intellectual beings, regret to see a great country deprived of the free exercise of its intellect by a Government which misconstrues its moral duties.

But the virtual result of this system is—that, for the advocacy of opinions which, but a short time ago, were deemed in France to be not only legitimate but honourable, many Frenchmen are at this hour receiving, in exile and bitterness of heart, from foreign Governments that tolerant permission to differ in opinion from M. de Morney which they cannot hope to find in their own.

That the asylum thus opened should be sought by persons of all classes and characters, it is impossible to avoid. But that the proximity to France of turbulent and factious men should be distasteful to the Government of the Emperor is not unnatural; and England is told that the hospitality she affords to such persons

should discriminate between the supporters of a ruined cause and the instigators of conspiracy.

But are we to be responsible for the private character and secret disposition of every foreigner who seeks our shores?

Louis Napoleon sought those shores as the supporter of a ruined cause.

And he left them as a conspirator.

Who was to anticipate that secret process in the human mind, by which the exile became the rebel?

The attempt at Boulogne was that of a Frenchman to usurp the throne of France; the attempt in the Rue Lepelletier was that of an assassin upon the life of a foreign sovereign. The one was ridiculous, but not ignoble. The other was appalling, but yet contemptible.

Yet, as regards the relations of England to France involved in either, the two cases are identical.

Once for all we will assert, that it is not henceforward the indignation of France which England has to dread; it is only the irritability of the French Government, against which she has to guard the sanctity of that asylum which is the last now open to Human Thought in Europe.

Once for all let us, in honour to the great and generous French nation, declare our opinion that it is not against the liberties of England that indignation is aroused in France; it is against the sensual and cynical despotism of a vulgar tyranny that irritation is beginning to be shown by the most witty and intelligent nation in Europe.

Louis Napoleon has declared war against the *Esprit* of France. And the true key to that ambiguous and threatening language which insults the common sense of two great nations, by declaring itself to be the expression of public opinion, is to be found in the feverish effort of an arbitrary but unstable government to divert into foreign channels, that rising sense of irritation and dissatisfaction which it dreads to find eventually directed against itself.

XII.

The final section of that pamphlet upon which we shall now close our consideration thus opens :—

"We have explained our conduct in regard to England; *we have shown all that the Emperor Napoleon III. has been for that country.*"

And it terminates with an expression of the hope that the Anglo-French Alliance may "continue proof against recent events;" and of the conviction that "France is incontestably entitled to appeal without self-reproach, and, consequently, without fear, to the judgment of the Public Conscience."

With regard "*to all that the Emperor Napoleon III. has been for England,*" those who have thus far perused the present pages will decide between ourselves and the Imperial amanuensis, as to which side of the English Channel has hitherto derived the greatest benefits from the relations of His Imperial Majesty with England.

Meanwhile, so far as regards the alliance between the two countries, it would be as unwise to under-rate the serious calamity of a war between two such powerful and neighbouring states, as it would be to attempt to avert it by incurring the yet more irretrievable calamity of violated justice and forfeited national honour.

Every Englishman will heartily concur in the honest and deed *per* desire that an alliance so honourable to the wisdom and magnanimity of two great nations may indeed "continue proof against a passing irritation," which, on our part, we have done nothing to incur.

But in order that this may be the case, it is absolutely necessary that this alliance should be based upon firmer foundations than those of Imperial pleasure; that it should not be degraded either by overbearing on the one side, or subserviency on the other; that it should not, in short, be the often-described "alliance of the man and the horse." But such a union of common interests and common sympathies as two mighty and highly civilised nations may honourably maintain between each other, in a spirit of generous conciliation and upon the broad basis of mutual advantage.

God grant, therefore, that whilst we maintain with loyalty our duties towards every friendly and allied power, we may never disregard those which we owe to ourselves, to humanity, and to justice.

May our statesmen ever remember that to their conduct Providence has entrusted, in this century, the sacred and solemn ark of Free Opinion!

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A Voice from England, in answer to 'l'Empereur Napoleon III. et l'
Angleterre'

London 1858

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